

# What's that Burning Sensation?

By AM3 Robert Ready and AM3 Christopher Dunn

About three-quarters of the way through our Westpac 2005 deployment on board USS *Nimitz*, the ship was conducting its weekly general-quarters drill. We were sitting on a workbench, something we often did due to the small area in the shop. Just before GQ was announced, we noticed that a cup of PD-680 had spilled on the workbench between us (although we didn't know it was PD-680 at the time.). PD-680 is a dry-cleaning solvent that is hazardous and corrosive. We immediately jumped off the workbench and grabbed some rags to clean up the spill.

About 15 minutes before general quarters secured, nearly three hours after being exposed to the spill, we looked at each other and confirmed that our buttocks were burning. At that point, we hopped off the workbench and put away our flash gear and gas masks while the burning became more and more intense. Neither of us yet had realized some of the PD-680 was on the back of our pants.

We quickly told our shift supervisor of our situation and ran to our berthing space to rinse off the chemical. After a 15-to-20-minute shower, the burning sensation had subsided but had not gone away completely. When I looked at my rear in the mirror, I saw a large red rash.

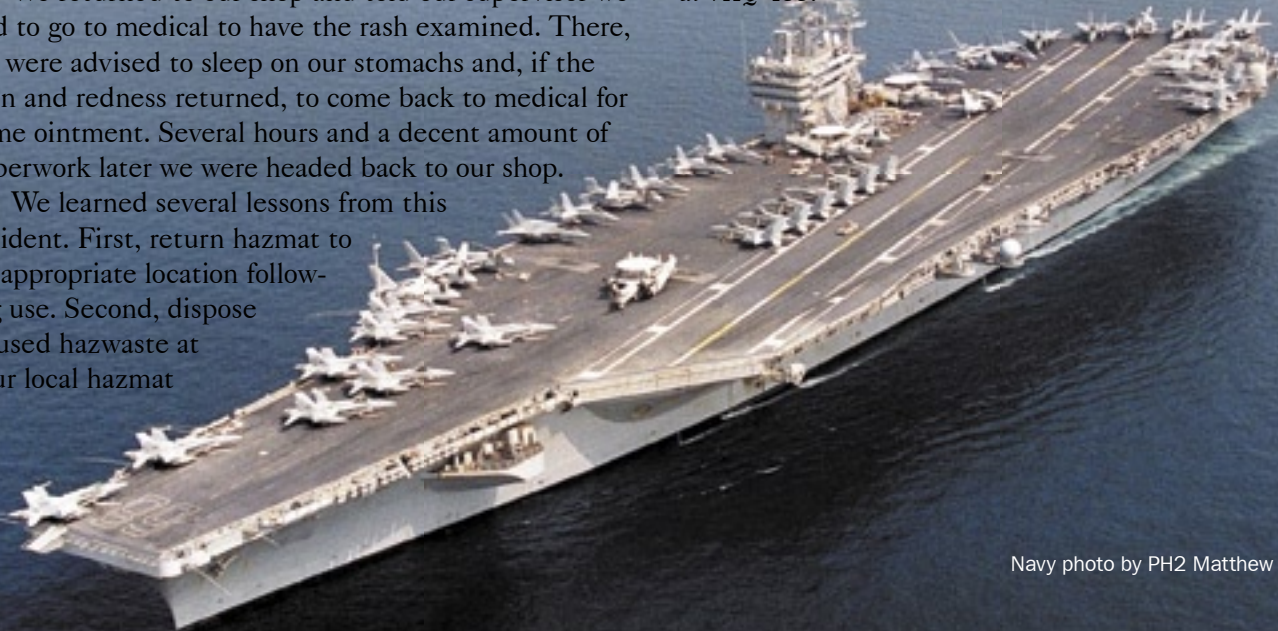
We returned to our shop and told our supervisor we had to go to medical to have the rash examined. There, we were advised to sleep on our stomachs and, if the pain and redness returned, to come back to medical for some ointment. Several hours and a decent amount of paperwork later we were headed back to our shop.

We learned several lessons from this incident. First, return hazmat to its appropriate location following use. Second, dispose of used hazwaste at your local hazmat



center. Also don't leave open containers of hazmat sitting on a workbench for the on coming shift to take care of. We also could have reduced the amount of discomfort if we had noticed our pants were soaked early on. Don't expect someone else to pick up after you. Before finishing a job, make sure all of your hazmat, PPE and tools are stored properly.

*Petty Officers Ready and Dunn work in the line division at VAQ-135.*



Navy photo by PH2 Matthew MaGee